

NEW-YORK, SUNDAY, APRIL 14, 1912.

Kate Carew, Attuned to Wireless Waves, Gets Marconi's Message

Inventor Says Power Will Some Day Be Transmitted by Wireless, and Telephone Wires Will Be Abolished; He Talks, Too, About His New Inventions, Including a Remarkable Compass.

If genius is only limitless patience, then I want to assure you, my dears, that Mr. Guglielmo Marconi is not the only one who is entitled to write O. C. after his name and be spoken of in contemporary talk as a friend of kings.

For three days—three long, oh, such long, weary days—I sat in the Waiting Garden of the Holland House, taking nourishment and sleep at stated intervals.

At the end of that time Mr. Marconi's secretary appeared. He said:

"I think I can arrange the interview soon, but you must promise me not to stay longer than fifteen minutes."

I promised, unhesitatingly.

In a little while he returned.

"I'm afraid I shall have to ask you to make it ten minutes."

I promised, hesitatingly.

Later, "I'm sorry, Miss Carew, but I can give you but five minutes with Mr. Marconi. He's frightfully busy. Promise me you won't stay longer."

"Oh, for a look at him," I agonized, "just a look."

On the way the secretary told me of his amusement at the bluff American men threw about being so tremendously over-worked. "My word, they do make a big noise about it, and they seem to have time for everything."

Meantime I wondered, "What can I say in five minutes?" Then I recalled hearing a Young Thing who had been introduced to Mr. Caruso recently chirp:

"Oh, Mr. Caruso, I do think you sing lovely."

I thought I might say something like that as an initial transmitter.

"Oh, Mr. Marconi, isn't your wireless telegraphy too interesting?"

that of Niagara, for example, will ever be transmitted by wireless?"

He immediately began to make little zig-zaggy lines, sort of Marcel—no, I mean Hertzian—waves along the table top as he spoke. It was an occupation he indulged in all through our tête-à-tête.

"It has already been transmitted experimentally. It may not be done absolutely in our—an apologetic wave is drawn among the others—in my time, but it is sure to be. Mr. Tesla is working on that problem now."

"It is an appalling thing to think of, isn't it?" piped I.

"It is."

We sat silent for a moment, our vibrations tuned to the pitch of wonder and enthusiasm. I came to first, and spent the interlude in taking notes of Mr. Marconi's appearance.

There is still something of the schoolgirl left in your old Aunt Kate, and I had simply taken it for granted that a man so famous, engaged in such unusual doings, chaining the elemental forces to the use of man, giving airy nothings local habitation and name, would have an appearance to correspond—dark, lustrous eyes, flashing continuous sparks, hair prematurely white, witness of midnight vigils; body a mere human motor, charged with psychic force, ascetic, attenuated.

The man I faced is of medium height, with good breadth of shoulder, rather stockily built. In spite of the fact that he has Italian "forbears" you would say, "Oh, an Englishman," if asked suddenly to classify him. He has the coloring of the Anglo-Saxon rather than of the Southern, blondish with hazel gray eyes, not large, but keen. His muscles have the taut look that indicate the out-of-door life. He has a determined chin, a good, generous mouth, set in lines of character, a broad, exposed forehead.



THE INVENTOR GAVE ME A WIRELESS SIGNAL TO CONTINUE.

but when I am experimenting I spend sometimes seven, eight, ten, fourteen and even sixteen hours at a stretch." He spoke the last figure with an enthusiasm that suggested he would like to get right back to the sixteen-hour labor law. "When I was in Newfoundland, trying to get in touch with Poldhu, Cornwall, two thousand miles away, I worked many days with scarcely any rest."

Mr. Marconi's hands are not the least harmonious with the rest of his rugged appearance. They are beautiful, artistic hands. As he tapped an occasional Morse S . . . and continued his Hertzian zig-zags I watched them, fascinated. They are the only feature that makes you realize the magician, the supernatural being flinging his words across wild wastes of water, by dipping masts and spars, over storm-sprayed waves, through flocks of screeching sea birds, from sand dunes to the centres of civilization. They suggested several questions. One was:

"Do you take any relaxation?"

LIKES MOTORS AND MUSIC.

"Yes, I am very fond of motoring and of music. I had a serious musical education. My piano playing, by developing my sense of delicate, harmonious sounds, has been of great use to me scientifically."

"Your daily routine?"

"Eight—Rise.

"Eight-thirty—Breakfast.

"Nine—Work."

That final monosyllable, embracing the major portion of his life, prompted me to ask, with a sigh, "Do you never tire of the work?"

"I get physically fatigued, but I never have any sense of satiety in regard to my experiments."

In this Mr. Marconi resembles Mr. Edison, who told me once he never tired of his work. Seems a bit strange to us women.

Just at this electric moment my sensory auditory nerves detected from the secretarial retreat a sort of Br-r-r-r and sulphurous sparks as from an agitated mental battery. I installed myself more comfortably. The Marconi system is supposed to lend assistance to those at sea in a deep fog. It did. The inventor, casting a soothing look over his shoulder, gave me an audible signal to continue.

"What kind of boy were you?" I asked.

"Interested in science?"

"Oh, tremendously. I commenced experimenting when I was seven. I made my first wireless experiment when I was nineteen."

I am a great believer in the attrition of domestic life. History shows but few lone children who arrive at eminence, so I inquired:

"Did an older brother act as inspiration?"

"I have an older brother"—the tone and boyish expression might be translated "dear old chap!" "I don't know that he was an inspiration, but he had a decided influence, although his tastes ran to agriculture and business. But he was most sympathetic always."

"How about the family—tolerant?"

"Just that, in the beginning. They considered me fantastic, and the idea I had as a youngster of sending messages through the hills on our Italian place did not keep them awake nights with admiration, but they did not throw any obstacles in my way. I consider that a good deal, and as soon as my experimenting was taken seriously they were very proud and happy."

I liked this reminiscent talk, so I sat still, for I was told that if you shift the reflector the slightest bit the messages will stop.

"Now, I know you'll think me a tremendous egotist, that I'm awfully self-assured, but I am going to confess to you that I always believed in myself, dreamed I was going to be somebody—make the world talk. I assume every boy believes that of himself, but I believe I believed it harder than most boys do."

SOME CONFIDENTIAL ZIGZAGS.

The zigzags were moving toward me in a confidential, quivery way.

"Don't you know it right now, from your mature standpoint, that a boy should feel that way?" I chirped.

"I believe it is the saving quality of the imaginative, dreamy temperament."

"Were you inspired as a boy by the life of any particular scientist?"

Mr. Marconi fell into an abyss of thought, from which he soon emerged.

"I don't recall that there was any special influence; but, unlike many scientists, I have always been tremendously interested in the experiments and discoveries of others."

The secretary passed from door to door. He gave me a look in which I read that he considered me the original Bramley coherer. I didn't care. I didn't intend to disclose as long as Mr. Marconi would talk. I pretended to be ignorant of that hurt expression of faith destroyed. Oh, false, perfumed woman. If he should get together and form a trust my stock of "Pon-My-Word-of-Honor" wouldn't be worth the paper it was written on.

I inquired, perfectly callous to the suffering near me, "Did you dream the wireless from the beginning?"

"No; I don't think I did. I had in mind always the idea of bridging countries closer in touch with each other, uniting remote spots and centres of life, but it was all so vague. As nearly as I can put that far-off ambition into words, it seemed to be that

I wanted to engage in some form of scientific work that would keep me travelling."

"So there is romance?" I asked in a delighted-to-die-you-so tone. We were back to the schoolgirl starting point again.

"Romance? I should say so," Marconi's face lights up as with an inner fire. No lack of emotion now. The fingers trace agitated wavelets like those that might be made by a huge marine spider.

"When I leave here I travel for five days into the heart of the Canadian wilderness. It is stimulating to see New York, but after a little while I find myself longing to get back to the wireless."

"To get back to the wireless." Surely that is a good translation for the almost untranslatable term "wanderlust."

"You love that Great Beyond?" I almost whispered. I was so afraid that Marconi the poet would become Marconi the inventor again.

"Yes, indeed. Those vast expanses of sea and land; those vague sky lines. It is among them that one spends the wonderful moments of life. Your imagination faces the infinite, and you read infinite possibilities. As Tennyson said, 'You see the vision of the worlds and all the wonders that may be.'"

Under that quiet, that very quiet, exterior, I seemed to realize the force of his imagination and the will to put its dreams into deeds.

"The human side is interesting, too, I suppose," asked I, slipping from the heights.

"Very. Queer lots. New types. Some clever, some not so clever. Many mere wasters of one's time."

"Do the natives take you seriously?"

"They have to. In some of the remote stations, small footholds of earth, I have to depend on native help. I have to instruct the people, trust them when I go away, inspire them with confidence. It is not the least interesting part of my work, I assure you."

MORE SUITABLE SURROUNDINGS.

I thought of all those little-heard-of places with which the name of Marconi is indissolubly linked, Salisbury Plains and Penarth, Alum and Glace bays, Wimereux and others. The walls of the sitting room seemed to fade away and I visioned him there—in a more suitable frame.

I had intended to ask something fluffy about the stage wireless, but the contrast of the Broadway stage with the other enormous one he had mentioned, where the dramas of Nature are played, where great primal forces are used instead of petty theatrical craft, made the interrogation impossible. I inquired, instead:

"Have the flying machines stolen your?"

I hesitated between thunder and lightning, and, misunderstanding, Mr. Marconi answered, quickly:

"I went up in one with some apparatus, but we were all so interested watching the aeroplane that we forgot the wireless."

"When the air is filled with flying machines, as is predicted, will the presence of so much mechanical force interfere with the wireless vibrations?"

"Not in the least."

"What nation has helped you most, financially, sympathetically?"

"Italy in both ways."

"Do you believe in spiritualism?"

"Yes, but I haven't gone into the study of it very deeply."

"Do you think the time is coming when we will disperse with the ordinary methods of communication, such as telephones, letters?"

Mr. Marconi certainly has the penetrating power. I got it then all right.

"I certainly do. We'll be able to tune our minds. I am sure of it. We do it now in a measure, but some day when you go into a restaurant and the waiter asks you, 'Alone?' you will say, 'Oh, no; I expect somebody.' You will send out a wave or two and soon the somebody will appear."

He laughed at the perfectly rapturous expression on my face. Then I hedged on my delight:

"Suppose another somebody is asking me at the same time?"

"Oh, but you can't receive and send simultaneously, you know." This still more gaily.

We got real jokey about that little luncheon.

Then I asked: "Supposing I don't remember what you have said to me in this interview. If I send out a wave, will you get it and answer?"

"I won't promise." The joker is the inventor now. "We haven't gone that far yet. Telepathy is still a promise rather than a fulfillment."

"Will the telephone wires be abolished finally?"

"The initial experiments have been successful. When you realize that before 1909 wireless had not been sent two miles, what can one not safely predict?"

"Did you take a personal interest in the first rescue at sea by the wireless?"

The Hertzian waves are very calm and collected now, the table top is allowed to rest. The serenity of my vis-à-vis is more marked than ever. There is no doubt that Mr. Marconi is a real lion. There is also no doubt that he is not of the class that gnaws the bars of the cage.

"I am going to disappoint you. I had no thrill, no excitement, no ecstasy, no more than I have at present." I don't think that very flattering. "In my imagination it had happened a thousand times, so when the reality came it meant nothing except the gratification at the saving of life."

NEW INVENTIONS.

"Are you working on any new inventions?"

"Several. I have my papers in the Patent Office now for a wireless compass which I believe will end all the perils of fog. It has been described at length in the newspapers."

"When do you expect the wireless will get around the world?"

"I cannot answer that."

"Does the curvature of the globe present any difficulties?"

"None at all at present."

"What is the greatest distance wireless messages have been sent to the present time?"

"From Great Britain to the Argentine Republic."

"Are they quicker than the cable?"

"From transmitter to the receiver I believe the wireless is a bit quicker, but the commercial difficulties of delivering the wireless messages makes the time of the two methods comparatively the same."

"What is the comparative rate?"

"From New York to London messages cost a word 15 cents by wireless and 25 by cable."

"And the exact time?"

"The fraction of a second."

At that unfortunate word "time" the secretary, like the genie of a lamp, suddenly appeared. It was quite easy to see that I was outside his friendly radius. He sent out danger signals into the ether, and Mr. Marconi picked up an oscillating impulse which referred to the five minutes I had promised not to overstay.

My mind, perfectly tuned, caught the farewell pitch.

I rose hastily, and as we shook hands I had the impression that I had received in the beginning, firmly emphasized, that all the nice things his admirers say about Mr. Marconi are true. He has the infinite patience, the acute observation, the practical skill and the active imagination attributed to him. He is the deer and the dreamer; the man of action and the poet.

And, as I caught the shy little twinkle in his eye, I added to this long but well deserved list the quality that makes the man, even the celebrated inventor, the O. C. and friend of kings, a good "pal."



"YOU WILL SEND OUT A WAVE OR TWO AND SOON THE SOMEBODY WILL APPEAR."



"ONE OF THE FIRST THINGS A SCIENTIFIC MAN HAS TO HAVE IS PATIENCE."

He would bow a courtly assent, as Mr. Caruso did; then I might add:

"It has made such a difference in our homelives."

By that time the secretary would be making frantic dots and dashes in the atmosphere and I would know it was time for me to go.

What I did say was, in answer to a polite regret:

"It was a long time, but I imagine my profession is like yours, Mr. Marconi, in one respect, that it requires a lot of patience."

The famous inventor had no appearance of the hurry his bluff-hating secretary had intimated. He waited leisurely for me to install myself and my interviewing apparatus into a fixed station, and then said, with an indulgent, comrade-like smile:

"Yes, indeed. One of the first things a scientific man has to have is patience."

We rigged our aerial wires to the poles of question and answer and started right in to send and receive messages.

I asked: "Do you believe, Mr. Marconi, that power for commercial use, such as

Wager he was a self-willed youngster, said it to myself.

There is nothing of the mystic in his appearance and nothing of the hard, aggressive business man with metallic tones. His face—if you think of emotion and mobility as one—is unemotional, but full of thought, directness, purpose. From his slicked hair, brushed smoothly back, to his shiny russet shoes he is perfectly unobtrusive in externals. He does not, apparently, take himself seriously overmuch, too intent on the big things to dwell on the little. His words, perfectly enunciated, have just a suspicion of a foreign influence, too vague to be definitely catalogued, not more evident than those of an English or American boy brought up in a Continental school.

To sum up, Mr. Marconi suggested the Doer so much more emphatically than the Dreamer that I asked, not forgetful of the three days I had trailed him to his lair and waited in a state of siege:

"How many hours a day do you work?"

"I don't call the business that called me here, the lawsuit with the United States Wireless Telegraph Company, really work,